

Employee FRONTLINE

A newsletter from the WA State Employee Assistance Program

Managing Stress: Cortisol and You



Knowledge of the physical responses to stress can help you intervene sooner. They include headaches, sleep disturbances, cuts that do not heal well, eyelid twitching, fatigue, catching colds easily, craving sweets, diarrhea, constipation, abdominal cramps, panic feelings and undefined fears, sudden feelings of sadness, forgetfulness, and

weight gain. Cortisol—the natural stress response/fat storage hormone—is the culprit in chronic stress. It is emitted by adrenal glands that sit atop your kidneys. You can reduce cortisol release with sleep and exercise. Black tea, massage, laughter, and even chewing gum can have a reduction effect. Talk to your doctor about physical symptoms that linger for any reason, because there may be other causes.

Social Success at Summer Parties

Does meeting new people and mingling at a summer party make you nervous? It is normal to feel nervous meeting new people, but try beating social anxiety with these tips: Before going to an event, practice positive self-talk—imagine people being happy to meet you; talk to the mirror and practice engaging. This will build a positive mind-set. This practice is no different from people rehearsing a speech six times or actors getting into their character before going on stage. It works, and others will sense your energy and engage with you. Reduced anxiety will allow the real you to come through. Also, go a bit early. There will be fewer people present, and you are less likely to feel anxiety than you may as a latecomer.

Remember the words—what, how, when, who, which, and why. Use these to keep a conversation going rather than experience the awful silence as you wonder, “Now what do I say?”



Slips, Falls, and Summer Safety

Slips and falls are the most common types of accidents with injury—over 38 million incidents worldwide each year. For every 100,000 people, ten will die from a fall. Knowing what causes slips and falls can help you prevent them—cluttered floors, loose floorboards, defective sidewalks, parking lot potholes, poorly constructed staircases, torn carpeting, recently mopped or waxed floors, poor weather conditions (ice, sleet, rain), improper training or technique when climbing or walking in hazardous areas or pathways, improper monitoring or assisting of elderly or disabled patients, and unsuitable footwear. Be mindful of these perils and you will reduce falls.

Salvia: Another Drug of Abuse

Salvia (Salvia divinorum) is a plant native to the region of Oaxaca, Mexico. It is sold on the Internet as a powerful hallucinogenic drug, but it is illegal in only 21 states. Usually smoked, Salvia creates an “out of body experience,” making it dangerous and unpredictable, and rendering the user utterly out of control of their behavior and decisions. Salvia is used mostly by young people ages 12 to 25. If you are a concerned parent, supervise your children, know who their friends are, and monitor their whereabouts. Talk to older teens about the dangers of Salvia and abuse of any drug, including alcohol. Signs of Salvia use may include drug paraphernalia, Internet purchases, or small butane torches used for burning the substance in a pipe.

Source: www.dea.gov.

Frontline Employee

Don't Lose Your Stuff on Vacation!



Losing your camera, iPhone, Kindle, or wallet on vacation can be a bummer. Create habits for managing specific items like these to reduce the risk of misplacing or forgetting them. For example, if the safest place for your

airline boarding pass is in your wallet, put it there always, not in a shirt or pants pocket where it can intermingle with other items or be dislodged. Mutually agree to quiz your traveling partner to prevent leaving things behind. When leaving a hotel room, dining area, or waiting area, look, point, and say when scanning the area, "Nothing here." This technique uses three methods—hearing, seeing, and pointing—to catch your overlooked items virtually every time. Of course, keep an eye on your belongings. The most common crime of opportunity during travel is stolen property unguarded by its owner.

Shift Workers and Health Burdens

Shift workers have a "metabolic health burden" to manage because their schedules often conflict with their need for proper sleep and eating, and the demands of everyday living. This contributes to the tendency for shift workers to be overweight relative to their daytime counterparts. Managing wellness is a skill for shift workers to prevent illnesses like diabetes. Just because you can get by with 4 or 5 hours of sleep does not mean you require less. Talk to your doctor and seek guidance on how to get more sleep.

Why Men Don't Seek Help



Help-seeking behavior is less often observed in men than in women. Research points to perceived vulnerability, fear, and denial as the reasons for this. Other barriers include men's resistance in giving up

control. Some men view seeking help as unacceptable. Men tend to be less interested in preventive health care. June is [Male Health Awareness Month](#), and if the above sounds like you, consider arranging that top-to-bottom physical you have been putting off, or that appointment to get the "bump" looked at by your doctor.

Helping Teens with Relationship Breakups

Sixty percent of high school students plan to break up with their current boyfriend or girlfriend when they leave for college. Clearly a lot of broken hearts are in store this summer. Teens now face additional challenges in relationship breakups—smartphones, chat, Facebook, and texting. These exacerbate and prolong distress, grief, and anxiety, and interfere with thinking about the relationship's end and experiencing closure. Encourage your teen to talk with you or a trusted friend about his or her experience to deal with breakup blues. Help him or her see the connection between instant communications and prolonged grief and disrupted closure. Discourage self-blame for the breakup, exaggerating one's faults, or other negative self-talk like, "I deserve this." Remind your child of his or her good qualities and avoid the "I told you so" to reinforce your approachability as a source of reliable support in the future. Encourage sleep, healthy foods, and exercise. Help your teen shift time and energy to positive behaviors—things he or she enjoys. This idea of dual-tracking, or participating in positive behaviors while simultaneously thinking about what happened, will ensure positive change. You are the parent, so trust your gut. If the blues linger or you become worried about your child's mental health, speak to a professional counselor.

